Breast cancer can affect men of any age, ethnicity or sexuality.

Any man can develop breast cancer, but there are some factors that may increase your risk of developing it, including:

- **Getting older.** Breast cancer can affect men of any age, but more cases are diagnosed in the age group 65-79.
- **High oestrogen levels,** which can be due to obesity or having liver disease.
- **Klinefelter’s syndrome,** where men are born with an extra X chromosome.
- **Previous radiation exposure,** especially in the chest and neck area.
- **Testicular events** such as undescended testicles, surgical removal or having mumps as an adult.
- **A family history of breast cancer.** About 20% of male breast cancer cases have a close family member who has had breast cancer. Inherited mutations in the BRCA2 gene may cause up to 10% of breast cancer cases in men and may also increase the risk of other cancers such as prostate cancer.

Here to support you

Remember you are not alone. There are resources available that offer practical and emotional advice and support, including online groups for men that have/had breast cancer, e.g:

- **Against Breast Cancer’s men only Facebook group** for men affected by breast cancer [https://bit.ly/3gVKYK4](https://bit.ly/3gVKYK4)
- **The Men’s VMU:** a monthly virtual meet-up group run by and for men that have/had breast cancer. (Twitter: @TheMensVMU, Email: doug.harper@themensvmu.org)
- **Breast Cancer Now’s ‘Someone Like Me’ service,** putting you in touch with men with breast cancer experiences
- **Macmillan:** A cancer support charity, including cancer community forums ([www.macmillan.org.uk/community](http://www.macmillan.org.uk/community))

Meet David and Doug. Read about David and Doug’s breast cancer experiences by scanning the QR code.

Against Breast Cancer funds groundbreaking research to improve detection, treatment and survival after breast cancer diagnosis. The focus of our research is preventing secondary spread, the main cause of breast cancer related deaths.

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This leaflet has been produced by Against Breast Cancer in collaboration with Dr Kerry Quincey, Doug Harper and David McCallion on behalf of the Men’s VMU.

**CHEST/PECS/NIPPLES/BREASTS – however you refer to it, it’s still Breast Cancer**
Men have breast tissue

Many people are unaware that men can develop breast cancer because they don’t consider men to have breasts. In fact, all men naturally have a small amount of breast tissue behind the nipple area. This contains small ducts (tubes) which is where breast cancer can potentially develop. Approximately 1% of all breast cancer cases in the UK occur in men.

Up to 90% of breast cancer cases in men are invasive cancer (invasive ductal carcinoma), where cancer cells grow beyond the ducts into the surrounding tissues. It may go on to spread to other areas of the body if not detected and treated early.

Non-invasive cancer (ductal carcinoma in situ/DCIS) is rare in men accounting for less than 10% of cases. Here, cancer cells are contained within the duct and do not spread.

What to look out for

Although breast cancer is rare in men, it is important to be aware of the symptoms. Symptoms of breast cancer can include:

- A usually painless lump
- Inverted/retracted nipple
- Oozing/bleeding from nipple
- A rash on nipple area
- Skin ulcer on the chest
- Lump/swelling in armpit
- Changes in size/shape of chest

70% of breast cancer cases in men are primarily detected by self-examination and seeing the GP, so it is important to check your body regularly. If you notice any changes that are unusual for you, see a GP as soon as possible. Symptoms may not always be due to breast cancer but it is essential to get them checked.

Diagnosing cancer early gives you the best chance of survival

Breast cancer can be categorised into stages and grades which helps clinicians decide on the best treatment options.

The stage (1,2,3 or 4) describes the size of the tumour and how far the cancer has spread. Stage 1 is the most treatable whereas stage 4, also called advanced, secondary or metastatic cancer, is the most difficult to treat and is when cancer cells have spread around the body.

Getting symptoms checked quickly means you are more likely to be diagnosed at an earlier stage of cancer. Survival rates are best when breast cancer is diagnosed in the early stages. Currently 20-25% of men are diagnosed at later stages of breast cancer.

It’s rare, but it’s there....

Approximately 420 men in the UK are diagnosed with breast cancer every year. That’s just over 1 man diagnosed every day.

(1 year survival by stage at diagnosis)

(data from Public Health England, 2021)